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TITLE: Methods for differentiating neural stem cells to glial cells using neuregulins

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CLAIMS:

What is claimed is:

- 1. A method for producing a population of mammalian glial cells comprising contacting at least one mammalian  $\underline{\text{neural}}$  stem cell with a culture medium containing a  $\underline{\text{neuregulin}}$ , wherein said  $\underline{\text{neuregulin}}$  is a ligand for a receptor selected from the group consisting of p185.sup.erbB2 and p180.sup.erbB4.
- 2. The method according to claim 1, wherein said  $\underline{\text{neuregulin}}$  is a partially purified preparation from mammalian tissue.
- 3. The method according to claim 2, wherein said mammalian tissue is bovine pituitary gland.
- 4. The method according to claim 1, where said neuregulin is substantially pure.
- 5. The method according to claim 1, wherein said mammalian  $\underline{\text{neural}}$  stem cell comprises a rat  $\underline{\text{neural}}$  crest stem cell.
- 6. The method according to claim 1, further comprising detecting the differentiation of said stem cell to said population of glial cells.
- 7. The method according to claim 6, wherein said detecting is with an antibody specific for a marker for glial cells.
- 8. The method according to claim 1, wherein said  $\underline{\text{neuregulin}}$  is glial growth factor and is named GGF,  $\underline{\text{heregulin}}$ ,  $\underline{\text{neu}}$  differentiating factor (NDF), or acetylcholine receptor inducing activity (ARIA).
- 9. The method according to claim 8, wherein said glial growth factor is GGF-II, GGF-III.
- 10. The method according to claim 8, wherein said glial growth factor is a partially purified preparation from mammalian tissue.
- 11. The method according to claim 10, wherein said mammalian tissue is bovine pituitary gland.
- 12. The method according to claim 8, where said neuregulin is substantially pure.

- 13. A method according to claim 8 wherein said stem cell comprises a rat  $\underline{\text{neural}}$  crest stem cell.
- 14. A method according to claim 8 further comprising detecting the differentiation of said stem cell to said population of glial cells.
- 15. A method according to claim 14 wherein said detecting is with an antibody specific for a marker for glial cells.
- 16. A method for producing a population of mammalian glial cells comprising contacting at least one mammalian  $\underline{\text{neural}}$  stem cell with a substantially pure  $\underline{\text{neuregulin}}$ , wherein said  $\underline{\text{neuregulin}}$  is a ligand for a receptor selected from the group consisting of p185.sup.erbB2 and p180.sup.erbB4.
- 17. A method for producing a population of mammalian glial cells comprising contacting at least one mammalian <u>neural</u> stem cell with a culture medium containing a <u>neuregulin</u>, wherein said neuregulin is a ligand for a receptor selected from the group consisting of p185.sup.erbB2 and p180.sup.erbB4.